NUMB. CCCCLXIII.

The SPECTATOR.

Omnia quæ ſenſu volvuntur vota diurno
Pectore ſopito reddit amica quies.
Venator defeſſa toro cùm membra reponit
Mens tamen ad ſylvas & ſua luſtra redit.
Judicibus lites, aurigis ſomnia currus,
Vanaque nocturnis meta cavetur equis.
Me quoque Muſarum ſtudium ſub nocte ſilenti
Artibus aſſuetis ſollicitare ſolet. Claud.

Thurſday, Auguſt 21. 1712.

I Was lately entertaining my ſelf with comparing *Homer*'s Ballance, in which *Jupiter* is repreſented as weighing the Fates of *Hector* and *Achilles*, with that of *Virgil*, wherein that Deity is introduced as weighing the Fates of *Turnus* and *Æneas*. I then conſidered, how the ſame way of thinking prevailed in the Eaſtern Parts of the World, as in thoſe noble Paſſages of Scripture, wherein we are told, that the great King of *Babylon*, the Day before his Death, had been weighed in the Ballance, and been found wanting. In other Places of the Holy Writings, the Almighty is deſcribed as weighing the Mountains in Scales, making the weight for the Winds, knowing the Ballancings of the Clouds, and, in others, as weighing the Actions of Men, and laying their Calamities together in a Ballance. *Milton*, as I have obſerved in a former Paper, had an Eye to ſeveral of theſe foregoing Inſtances, in that beautiful Paſſage wherein he repreſents the Arch-Angel and the Evil Spirt as addreſſing themſelves for the Combat, but parted by the Ballance which appeared in the Heavens, and weighed the Conſequences of ſuch a Battel.

Th' Eternal to prevent ſuch horrid fray
Hung forth in Heav'n his golden Scales, yet ſeen
Betwixt Aſtrea and the Scorpion Sign,
Wherein all things created firſt he weigh'd,
The pendulous round Earth with ballanc'd Air
In counterpoiſe, now ponders all events,
Battels and Realms; in theſe he puts two weights
The ſequel each of parting and of fight,
The latter quick up flew, and kickt the beam;
Which Gabriel *ſpying, thus beſpake the Fiend.*

Satan I know thy ſtrength, and thou know'ſt mine,
Neither our own but giv'n; what folly then
To boaſt what Arms can do, ſince thine no more
Than Heav'n permits, nor mine, though doubled more
To trample thee as mire: for proof look up,
And read thy lot in yon cæleſtial Sign, [weak,
Where thou art weigh'd and ſhown, how light, how
If thou reſiſt. The Fiend look'd up, and knew
His mounted Scale aloft; nor more, but fled
Murm'ring, and with him fled the ſhades of night.

These ſeveral amuſing Thoughts having taken Poſſeſſion of my Mind ſome time before I went to ſleep, and mingling themſelves with my ordinary Ideas, raiſed in my Imagination a very odd kind of Viſion. I was, methought, replaced in my Study, and ſeated in my Elbow Chair, where I had indulged the foregoing Speculations, with my Lamp burning by me, as uſual. Whilſt I was here meditating on ſeveral Subjects of Morality, and conſidering the Nature of many Virtues and Vices, as Materials for thoſe Diſcourſes with which I daily entertain the Publick, I ſaw, methought, a Pair of Golden Scales hanging by a Chain of the ſame Metal over the Table that ſtood before me; when, on a ſudden, there were great Heaps of Weights thrown down on each ſide of them. I found, upon examining theſe Weights, they ſhewed the Value of every thing that is in Eſteem among Men. I made an Eſſay of them, by putting the Weight of Wiſdom in one Scale, and that of Riches in another; upon which the latter, to ſhew its comparative Lightneſs, immediately *flew up and kickt the Beam.*

But, before I proceed, I muſt inform my Reader, that theſe Weights did not exert their Natural Gravity, till they were laid in the Golden Ballance, inſomuch that I could not gueſs which was light or heavy, whilſt I held them in my Hand. This I found by ſeveral Inſtances, for upon my laying a Weight in one of the Scales, which was inſcribed by the Word Eternity: tho' I threw

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in that of Time, Prosperity, Affliction, Wealth, Poverty, Interest, Success, with many other Weights, which in my Hand seemed very ponderous, they were not able to stir the oppolite Ballance, nor could they have prevailed, though assisted with the Weight of the Sun, the Stars, and the Earth.

Upon emptying the Scales, I laid several Titles and Honours, with Pomps, Triumphs, and many Weights of the like Nature, in one of them, and seeing a little glittering Weight lie by me, I threw it accidentally into the other Scale, when, to my great Surprize, it proved so exact a Counterpoise, that it kept the Ballance in an Equilibrium. This little glittering Weight was inscribed upon the Edges of it with the Word *Vanity*. I found there were several other Weights which were equally Heavy, and exact Counterpoises to one another; a few of them I tried, as Avarice and Poverty, Riches and Content, with some others.

There were likewise several Weights that were of the same Figure, and seemed to Correspond with each other, but were entirely different when thrown into the Scales; as Religion and Hypocrisie, Pedantry and Learning, Wit and Vivacity, Superstition and Devotion, Gravity and Wisdom, with many others.

I observed one particular Weight lettered on both sides, and upon applying my self to the Reading of it, I found on one side, written, *In the Dialect of Men*, and underneath it, *CALAMITIES*; on the other side was written, *In the Language of the Gods*, and underneath, *BLESSINGS*. I found the intrinsick Value of this Weight to be much greater than I imagined, for it over-powered Health, Wealth, Good Fortune, and many other Weights, which were much more ponderous in my Hand than the other.

There is a Saying among the *Scotch*, that an Ounce of Mother is worth a Pound of Clergy; I was sensible of the Truth of this Saying, when I saw the difference between the Weight of Natural Parts, and that of Learning. The Observation which I made upon these two Weights opened to me a new Field of Discoveries, for notwithstanding the weight of Natural Parts was much heavier than that of Learning, I observed that it weighed an hundred times heavier than it did before, when I put Learning into the same Scale with it. I made the same Observation upon Faith and Morality; for notwithstanding the latter out-weighed the former separately, it received a thousand times more additional weight from its Conjunction with the former, than what it had by it self. This odd Phænomenon shewed it self in other Particulars, as in Wit and Judgment, Philosophy and Religion, Justice and Humanity, Zeal and Charity, Depth of Sense and Perspicuity of Stile, with innumerable other Particulars, too long to be mentioned in this Paper.

As a Dream seldom fails of dashing Seriousness with Impertinence, Mirth with Gravity, methought I made several other Experiments of a more ludicrous Nature, by one of which I found that an *English* Octavo was very often heavier than a *French* Folio; and by another, that an old *Greek* or *Latin* Author weighed down a whole Library of Moderns. Seeing one of my *Spectators* lying by me, I laid it into one of the Scales, and flung a two-penny Piece into the other. The Reader will not enquire into the Event, if he remembers the first Tryal which I have recorded in this Paper. I afterwards threw both the Sexes into the Ballance; but as it is not for my Interest to disoblige either of them, I shall desire to be excused from telling the Result of this Experiment. Having an Opportunity of this Nature in my Hands, I could not forbear throwing into one Scale the Principles of a Tory, and in the other those of a Whig; but as I have all along declared this to be a Neutral Paper, I shall likewise desire to be silent under this Head also, though upon examining one of the Weights, I saw the Word *TEKEL* Engraven on it in Capital Letters.

I made many other Experiments, but as I have not room for them all in this Day's Speculation, I may perhaps reserve them for another; and shall only add, that upon my awaking I was sorry to find my Golden Scales vanished, but resolved for the future to learn this Lesson from them, not to despise or value any Things for their Appearances, but to regulate my Esteem and Passions towards them according to their real and intrinsick Value.

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